CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A machine-implemented method comprising:

creating data that represents a new expectation for an installation result, for one or more resources associated with a software installer, the new expectation being a transition from an expectation of volatility to an expectation of stability for future software installs.

2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

generating a comparison of a current software installation with a previous software installation; and

identifying, based on the comparison, resources that change in their installation result from the previous software installation to the current software installation, despite the new expectation of stability for the resources.

3.   The method of claim 2, further comprising identifying, based on the comparison, resources that have not changed in their installation result from the previous software installation to the current software installation, despite an expectation that the unchanged resources should change from the previous software installation to the current software installation.

4.   The method of claim 2, further comprising presenting potential problems with the current software installation based on the identified resources to facilitate verification of an installer for a software product.

5.   The method of claim 4, further comprising tracking expectations for the resources in a primary installation baseline and a secondary installation baseline, and wherein presenting the potential problems comprises presenting a baseline-update interface by transmitting markup language data.

6. The method of claim 4, further comprising excluding a set of resources from the generated comparison for the software product.

7. The method of claim 4, wherein the expectations of resource changes, including the data, are stored in a relational database indexed by date, platform, language, and product configuration.

8. The method of claim 4, wherein the expectations for the resources relate to attributes comprising modification date stamp information, file size information, security permissions information, and checksum information.

9. The method of claim 4, wherein the resources comprise files and system registry entries, and the installation result comprises deletions, additions and modifications of the resources.

10. A software product tangibly embodied in a machine-readable medium, the software product comprising instructions operable to cause one or more data processing apparatus to perform operations comprising:

generating a comparison of a current software installation with a previous software installation; and

identifying, based on the comparison, resources that have not changed in their installation result from the previous software installation to the current software installation, despite an expectation that the unchanged resources should change from the previous software installation to the current software installation.

11. The software product of claim 10, wherein the operations further comprise:

receiving input specifying which of the identified resources should be static in their installation result for future software installations; and

designating a new expectation of stability for the specified resources according to the received input.

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12.   The software product of claim 10, wherein the operations further comprise identifying, based on the comparison, resources that have changed in their installation result from the previous software installation to the current software installation, despite an expectation that the changed resources should not change from the previous software installation to the current software installation.

13.   The software product of claim 12, wherein the operations further comprise presenting potential problems with the current software installation based on the identified resources to facilitate verification of an installer for a software product.

14.   The software product of claim 13, wherein the operations further comprise tracking the expectations of resource changes in a primary installation baseline and a secondary installation baseline, and wherein presenting the potential problems comprises presenting a baseline-update interface by transmitting markup language data.

15.   The software product of claim 13, wherein the operations further comprise excluding a set of resources from the generated comparison for the software product.

16.   The software product of claim 13, wherein the expectations of resource changes are stored in a relational database indexed by date, platform, language, and product configuration.

17.   The software product of claim 13, wherein the expectations of resource changes relate to attributes comprising modification date stamp information, file size information, security permissions information, and checksum information.

18.   The software product of claim 13, wherein the resources comprise files and system registry entries, and the installation result comprises deletions, additions and modifications of the resources.

19.   A system comprising:

a build controller;

an install controller comprising a database including a baseline recording expectations of stability or volatility for one or more resources associated with a software installer; and

one or more install slave machines;

wherein the build controller automatically triggers the install controller to initiate installer tests as part of a software build process, and the install controller automatically dispatches installation to the one or more install slave machines and collects test results to be presented in a report comprising a baseline-update interface.

20.   The system of claim 19, wherein the one or more install slave machines comprise multiple computers.

21.   The system of claim 19, wherein the install controller communicates with the one or more install slave machines using Simple Object Access Protocol.

22.   The system of claim 19, wherein the baseline-update interface comprises a web-based user interface allowing baseline updates across product SKU, language, operating system and custom/non-custom installs, in combination or all at once.

23.   The system of claim 19, wherein the expectations for the resources relate to attributes comprising modification date stamp information, file size information, security permissions information, and checksum information.

24.   A system comprising:

means for generating a current install comparison of a computing system before a software installation, with the computing system after the software installation, the current install comparison identifying new resources that are added to the computing system during the software installation and identifying system resources that are modified during the software installation, and the current install comparison recording at least one attribute of the resources for the current software installation;

means for generating a software trend comparison of the current install comparison with a previous install comparison, the software trend comparison indicating which of the resources have changed in the at least one attribute from the previous install to the current install, and the software trend comparison indicating which of the resources have not changed in the at least one attribute from the previous install to the current install;

means for comparing the software trend comparison with a record of installation expectations that indicates which of the resources should be in flux, and which of the resources should be stable from the previous install to the current install, with respect to the at least one attribute; and

means for presenting potential problems with the current software installation based on the comparison of the software trend comparison with the expectations record.